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Farm Broadcasters Letter



United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250-1340 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2617

July 2, 1993

FARM ASSET VALUES -- The relatively stable pattern of asset values is expected to continue in 1993. Per acre value of farm real estate is forecast up 1 to 3 percent. Inventories of crops and livestock will remain unchanged, with the values of financial assets increasing slightly. Cash receipts for U.S. agricultural products are forecast up 1 to 2 percent in 1993. Receipts from soybeans, fruits, vegetables and greenhouse products are expected to be strong this year. **Contact: Robert Dubman (202) 219-0809.**

FARMLAND TRANSFERS -- Ninety-three percent of farmland sold last year is expected to remain in agriculture over the next five years. Largest shifts to nonagricultural uses are expected in East Coast regions where demand for nonagricultural uses is strongest. In 1992 owner-operators participated in 58 percent of farmland purchases. Nonfarmers made 30 percent of the purchases. Voluntary and estate sales accounted for 72 percent of all farmland transfers. Family transfers totaled 18 percent. Foreclosures and other involuntary transfers accounted for only seven percent in 1992. **Contact: Roger Hexem (202) 219-0423.**

INDUSTRIAL DEMAND FOR AG PRODUCTS -- Projections for the next three years indicate that the amount of plant matter used in industrial materials, excluding paper and natural rubber, could increase by over five million tons, almost double the rate of 1990. Housing, textiles, and fabricating materials are likely to show above-average use of agricultural materials. Printing and publishing is expected to show sluggish growth. Production increases in ethanol, adhesives and biopolymers will increase the industrial uses of starch and sugar. In three years industrial uses of corn are expected to increase 140 million bushels to 795 million bushels, about 8 percent a year. **Contact: Lewrene Glaser (202) 219-0085.**

PESTICIDES AND SUSTAINABLE AG -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy says USDA will intensify its effort to reduce the use of higher risk pesticides, and promote integrated pest management and sustainable agricultural practices. In a joint statement issued with the Food and Drug Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency, Espy said the agencies will help test and implement improved methods of pest management already used by many farmers; will reform pesticide regulatory programs to encourage registration of safer pesticides; and reduce risks associated with pesticides for all Americans. Espy says the food supply is safe, but it is the responsibility of government to look at every opportunity to improve the protection of public health, **Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.**

EXPORTS AND IMPORTS -- The U.S. agricultural trade surplus for October 1992 to April 1993 totals \$12.2 billion, unchanged from the level of a year earlier. Imports for the October to April period total \$14.6 billion, four percent higher than the same period last year. Exports for fiscal year 1993 are projected at \$42.5 billion, up \$400 million. Imports are forecast at \$25 billion, up \$2.8 billion over last year. **Contact: Joel Greene (202) 219-0822.**

THE ASIAN FACTOR -- Asia now accounts for about 40 percent of U.S. farm exports, and is the largest regional market for U.S. agricultural trade. There is opportunity for expanding exports to the area. Economic growth has been faster than projected, and China is experiencing a decline in exportable surpluses. There is increased demand in the region for wheat, coarse grains, soybeans, cotton and meats. Market-oriented reforms, either unilateral, or multilateral under GATT, are expected to lead to higher U.S. farm exports to East Asian markets. **Contact: Rip Landes (202) 219-0705.**

BOOST FOR CANOLA -- The U.S. canola industry will likely benefit from new Federal regulations for nutritional labeling of food which go into effect next May. To qualify for the label "low in saturated fat," an oil can have no more than 1 gram of saturated fatty acid per serving, and no more than 15 percent of its calories derived from saturated fat. Canola oil is the only vegetable oil widely available that meets this standard. Consumer demand for canola oil is expected to increase. Most canola oil currently is imported from Canada. **Contact: George Douvelis (202) 219-0840.**

ENHANCING NATURAL RESISTANCE -- Plants can be protected by a gene that is switched on when the plant is being eaten by insects. A scientist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, has placed a new on-off switch into the gene that makes a key plant hormone, cytokinin, which produces a caterpillar-killing protein. The attacked plant overproduces the hormone, up to 70 times greater, in the leaves. The system apparently simulate a plant's natural defense response, and may use less of the plant's energy than other systems of insect control. The gene could be helpful to plants such as tobacco, tomato, soybeans and sugarbeets. Further research is underway. **Contact: Ann Smigocki (301) 504-5848.**

FOOD STAMPS -- One of every ten Americans uses food stamps. Recent figures show that participation in the Food Stamp Program declined slightly in April, from a record 27.38 million people to 27.35 million, a decrease of 30,000 due to seasonal employment. Many speakers at the recent Hunger Forum, conducted in Washington, D.C. by USDA, emphasized the need for Congress to rectify shortcomings in the current food stamp program. **Contact: Phil Shanholtzer (202) 305-2286.**

EXERCISE AND BLOOD SUGAR -- People who are at risk of developing diabetes can improve their tolerance of blood sugar if they regularly exercise. A 12-week study of men and women over age 50 at USDA's Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging, at Tufts University in Boston, shows that even if people don't lose weight in the process, exercise improves the body's ability to respond to insulin so that glucose moves readily from the blood into body cells where it can be used. The study also showed that weight loss produces the greatest improvement to insulin response. The improved results came from long-term regular exercise, not from a single session. **Contact: Virginia Hughes (617) 556-3079.**

FACTSHEET -- The newest in a series of factsheets, "A Small-Scale Agriculture Alternative - Shiitake Mushrooms," is now available from the USDA Cooperative State Research Service Office for Small-Scale Agriculture. The publication lists and discusses basic steps in cultivating shiitake on logs, production scales, market prices and marketing points, and economics. Single copies are available at no charge from Howard Kerr, OSSA Program Director, Ag Box 2244, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-2244. **Contact: George Holcomb (202) 720-5746.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1882 -- Two-tier pricing, status quo or free market were some of the options open for discussion at the nation's first dairy summit. On this edition **Brenda Curtis** reviews the dairy story as told by industry leaders. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1364 -- Pesticide report; credit shopping; marsh grass controls erosion; prevention ideas gaining ground; the electronic library. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1874 -- USDA News Highlights; 1993 conservation recommendations; dairy summit results; rural hunger; pesticide report; dairy referendum PSAs. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1627 -- Exercise and glucose tolerance; corn earworm discovery; agriculture & environmentalism; new use for jojoba; blight-resistant hazelnuts. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Monday, July 12, U.S. crop production report, world ag supply & demand; Tuesday, July 13, weekly weather and crop update, world ag & grain production, world oilseed situation, world cotton situation; Thursday, July 15, milk production; Friday, July 16, livestock & poultry outlook, vegetable production report. These are the **USDA** reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- **Pat O'Leary** reports on farm broadcasting in Russia. **Lynn Wyvill** reports on an Extension bilingual program to help immigrants adjust to life in the U.S.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA chief meteorologist **Norton Strommen** on the latest weather and crop conditions; USDA economist **James Miller** on the dairy outlook; USDA economist **Michael Kurtzig** on agricultural exports to North Africa and the Middle East; and USDA economist **Joel Greene** on U.S. agricultural trade.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **DeBoria Janifer** reports on high-lysine rice; **Pat O'Leary** reports on computer landscaping; **Lynn Wyvill** reports on beta carotene and health.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update with anchors **Eric Parsons** and **Lori Spiczka**. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

THOUSANDS OF ACRES...are underwater and the crops lost, says **Bart Bartholomew** (KLNT, Clinton, IA). The Mississippi River is at a 100-year flood level. Damage is expected to be extensive to cropland. Secretary Espy inspected flooding in Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin and South Dakota.

PRODUCERS...are wondering if the wet weather will generate a hike in prices, says **Hal Hanna** (KXEL, Waterloo, IA). Corn and beans are about a month behind in Hal's area, placing them close to the edge of the window at harvest. He says the only thing that is ahead is rainfall, its 8 inches more than last year at this time.

WE'RE JUST BEGINNING...to breath more easily, says **Karl Guenther** (WKZO, Kalamazoo, MI). The cold, wet spring caused fear that many crops would be lost. Weather apparently didn't affect asparagus, a good crop was brought in. Hot weather finally arrived in late June. Karl says you can almost hear the cucumbers and cabbage growing.

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WHEAT HARVEST...is keeping us busy, says **Ron Hays** (Oklahoma Agrinet, Oklahoma City). Harvest is about two weeks late. Ron says the results are spotty, from crops suffering damaged caused by hail, to weed infestation and resulting dockage, to producers with good yields. The harvest in Kansas will be getting underway the first part of July.

APPLE GROWERS...are at the end of their patience regarding Japan's barriers to importing U.S. apples, says **Bob Hoff** (Northwest Ag News Network, Spokane, WA). Bob says growers tell him they aren't for trade retaliation, but action needs to be taken to solve the impasse. Bob says the wheat crop looks really good, all that's needed is a good price.

YOUTH SAFETY DAY...was a big hit with the 500 kids and parents attending the event at the county fairground, says **Charlie Kampa** (KBRF, Fergus Falls, MN). Implement dealers and the dairy association sponsored prizes and lunch. Kids learned about safety relating to items such as electricity, lawn mowers, guns, and other items. Charlie says it looks like an annual event.

VIC POWELL 
Chief, Radio & TV Division